

Center for Material Culture Studies

Meeting Agenda & Minutes

September 20, 2017
211 Old College 12:10-1 pm

In attendance: Ames, Alex (Hist/CMCS Grad Work Grp); Bellion, Wendy (Art Hist), Bowler, Anne (Sociology); Brückner, Martin (Engl/ CMCS); Dominguez Torres, Monica (Art Hist); Erickson, Jesse (UD Library); Helton, Laura (Engl); Hess Norris, Debra (Art Cons); Isenstadt, Sandy (Art Hist/ CMCS); McCormick, Monica (UD Library); Schmidt, Laura (WPAMC/CMCS); Petersen, Lauren (CAS); Samuels Lasner, Mark (UD Library); Stetz, Margaret (Woman Studies); Venturi, Jessica (CMCS Grad); Zehnder, Amanda (UD Mus); Rye-Kopec, Ashley (UD Mus)

1. Greetings and Introduction of new people (5 min)

- Laura Schmidt will now be handling CMCS finances and expenses.
- Jessica Venturi (English Dept.) is the CMCS Graduate Assistant for 2017-18.
- Dr. Laura Helton is a new Assistant Professor in the English Dept.
(<http://www.english.udel.edu/people/Pages/bio.aspx?i=327>)

2. Introducing the NEW Graduate Working Group (5 min)

- Graduate students Alex Ames and Michelle Everidge (Art History) co-chair the NEW working group, “OBJECT FIGHT CLUB: Methods in Material Culture Graduate Student Working Group.” Dr. Sarah Wasserman (English) is currently serving as their faculty sponsor.
- The working group is an interdisciplinary space created by graduate students, for graduate students aimed at providing opportunities for hands-on training and work with objects. The group is currently averaging approximately 19 students per meeting, and has already hosted several object-study field trips throughout the summer.
- For more information regarding upcoming Fall semester activities, meetings, and field trips visit: <https://wp.me/p78ZLw-wS>
- Object Fight Club would like to encourage graduate faculty to spread the word about the working group to interested students across the humanities.

3. CMCS Report of 2016-2017 activities, including Delphi 2017 (5 min)

- The Class of 2017 marked Delaware Public Humanities Institute’s (DELPHI) 10th Anniversary at University of Delaware.
 - This summer, 14 graduate students from across the humanities participated in 2 weeks of all-day workshops, trainings, activities, and special guest speakers.
 - DELPHI is currently working to expand its support of graduate students by providing formal advising/mentorships throughout the academic year that follows the Institute.

- There will be a DELPHI reunion/meeting for the Class of 2017 on November 29th from 6-8pm (Location TBD). Graduate students who may be interested in participating in DELPHI in the future are encouraged to attend.
- Emerging Scholars and CMCS have decided to stagger symposiums so that each takes place in alternating years.
- CMCS is proud to announce it provided over \$40,000 in funding to graduate student and faculty in 2016-17 for projects in material culture studies.
 - This year, we have added additional funding available to serve undergraduates including field trips and summer research.
 - Applications are currently being accepted for our October 15th deadline: <https://wp.me/p78ZLw-ru> Faculty are encouraged to spread the word to your students and colleagues.

4. Upcoming CMCS events (5 min)

Oct 15, 2017

- Grant Deadlines and Application Instructions for Grad Student Awards: <https://wp.me/p78ZLw-ru>

Nov 17-18, 2017

- First Biannual CMCS Conference “Imagined Forms: Modeling and Material Culture (<https://www.imaginedforms.com/>)
Registration is required – Reserve your space via the today!

November 29, 2017, 6-8pm

- DELPHI 2017 reunion and information meeting for DELPHI 2018

April 27-28, 2018

- 15th Emerging Scholars Symposium:
“Hazardous Objects: Function, Materiality, and Context”
CALL FOR PAPERS: <https://wp.me/P78ZLw-xx>

5. *Fugitive Archives* – edited volume; result of CMCS-U Mainz symposium (5 min)

- CMCS is working with UD Press to publish an edited volume that will feature presentations from the 2016 CMCS-U Mainz Symposium.
- The volume will contain a set of scholarly essays from graduate students, a set of speculative think pieces, a set of picture essays, and a set of inset pieces with short essays accompanied by images.
- The volume will be available online and in print, with beautiful color images throughout.
- CMCS hopes to make this publication an on-going tradition, every-other year, to offer a real, serious snap-shop of the material culture research at UD.

6. ThingStor update – prototype database: <http://thingstor.lib.udel.edu/> (5 min)

- Prototype is ready for *ThingStor: A Material Culture Database for Finding Objects in Literature and Visual Art* (<http://thingstor.lib.udel.edu/>)

- ThingStor will become an interactive material culture digital database for research and teaching that at once collects and curates the correlation between objects and their representations in works of literature and the visual arts.
- ThingStor Working Group will have its first meeting on Wednesday, September 27th at 6pm.

7. Discussion: Creation of a “general” MCS certificate?

- CMCS would like to propose the creation of a Material Culture Studies Certificate program that would offer graduate students across disciplines the opportunity to show proof of specialization in this sub-field.
- The motivation for this Certificate lies in the fact that many students in fields like English, do not currently have a certificate option to show their highly specialized knowledge of Material Culture Theory and Practice. The proposed certificate would not compete with similar certificates, but would be an add-on designed to give recognition to those who take substantial coursework in material culture studies across the humanities.
- In the open forum discussion on this topic, the following questions and suggestions were raised:
 - This Certificate could create an opportunity for more incorporation of field training/experience, as well as work to foster more partnerships with organizations throughout the community
 - What is the value of a certificate like this for the community?
 - For Masters and Doctoral students, this will help distinguish them on the humanities job market
 - For Doctoral students, this certificate would demonstrate to other Universities that the student is on the “crest of the wave” of an innovative and growing sub-field
 - Is there a way to work in collaboration with the Winterthur and Museum Studies programs so as not to compete with their programs?
 - How will the certificate work around the current departmental rules regarding limits to courses taken outside of a particular department?
 - One solution may be to have more courses cross-listed
 - A program like this would need to have “very low walls” in which graduate students are allowed across the humanities to take at least 2 courses outside of the department, certain courses in each department would need to be flagged as counting toward this specialization.
 - Program would need to include certain “benchmarks” such as an intro theory course, and a practicum.
 - Museum Studies (in History Dept.) doesn’t quite cover every means of thinking in material culture (ex: no space for ephemera) – this certificate is an opportunity to make material culture more inclusive (especially of Theory).
 - CMCS wants to continue this as an ongoing discussion over the next few months. Suggestions, questions, and concerns from interested parties are all welcome.